

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 718

AN ACT

To provide a monthly allotment of free telephone calling time to members of the United States armed forces stationed outside the United States who are directly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Troops Phone Home
5 Free Act of 2003”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 It is the purpose of this Act to support the morale
3 of the brave men and women of the United States armed
4 services stationed outside the United States who are di-
5 rectly supporting military operations in Iraq or Afghani-
6 stan (as determined by the Secretary of Defense) by giving
7 them the ability to place calls to their loved ones without
8 expense to them.

9 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

10 The Congress finds the following:

11 (1) The armed services of the United States are
12 the finest in the world.

13 (2) The members of the armed services are
14 bravely placing their lives in danger to protect the
15 security of the people of the United States and to
16 advance the cause of freedom in Iraq.

17 (3) Their families and loved ones are making
18 sacrifices at home in support of the members of the
19 armed services abroad.

20 (4) Telephone contact with family and friends
21 provides significant emotional and psychological sup-
22 port to them and helps to sustain and improve mo-
23 rale.

1 **SEC. 4. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

2 **BENEFIT.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as possible after the date
4 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall
5 provide, wherever practicable, prepaid phone cards, or an
6 equivalent telecommunications benefit which includes ac-
7 cess to telephone service, to members of the armed forces
8 stationed outside the United States who are directly sup-
9 porting military operations in Iraq or Afghanistan (as de-
10 termined by the Secretary) to enable them to make tele-
11 phone calls to family and friends in the United States
12 without cost to the member.

13 (b) MONTHLY AMOUNT.—The value of the benefit
14 provided by subsection (a) shall not exceed \$40 per month
15 per person.

16 (c) END OF PROGRAM.—The program established by
17 subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is 60 days
18 after the date on which the Secretary determines that Op-
19 eration Iraqi Freedom has ended.

20 (d) FUNDING.—

21 (1) USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES.—In car-
22 rying out this section, the Secretary shall maximize
23 the use of existing Department of Defense tele-
24 communications programs and capabilities, private
25 support organizations, private entities offering free

1 or reduced-cost services, and programs to enhance
2 morale and welfare.

3 (2) USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.—In addi-
4 tion to resources described in paragraph (1) and
5 notwithstanding any limitation on the expenditure or
6 obligation of appropriated amounts, the Secretary
7 may use available funds appropriated to or for the
8 use of the Department of Defense that are not oth-
9 erwise obligated or expended to carry out this sec-
10 tion.

11 **SEC. 5. DEPLOYMENT OF ADDITIONAL TELEPHONE EQUIP-**
12 **MENT.**

13 The Secretary of Defense shall work with tele-
14 communications providers to facilitate the deployment of
15 additional telephones for use in calling the United States
16 under this Act as quickly as practicable, consistent with
17 the availability of resources. Consistent with the timely
18 provision of telecommunications benefits under this Act,
19 the Secretary should carry out this section and section 4
20 in a manner that allows for competition in the provision
21 of such benefits.

1 **SEC. 6. NO COMPROMISE OF MILITARY MISSION.**

2 The Secretary of Defense shall not take any action
3 under this Act that would compromise the military objec-
4 tives or mission of the Department of Defense.

Passed the Senate April 1, 2003.

Attest:

Secretary.

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